

# IN-CLASS ESSAY

## Style Revision Checklist

For best results, go through these revision and editing steps IN ORDER. STOP after each section and revise.

### CHECK YOUR QUOTATIONS:

- ☐ If you did NOT include quotations in your rough draft, you must use and document at least TWO to meet the requirements of the rubric.
- ☐ Check your documentation of the quotes.  
For simple, one-source MLA documentation, remember to put ONLY the page number (no “p.” or “pg.” even) in parentheses after the quotation and quotation mark. If you need to put a period, comma, colon, or semi-colon in the sentence at this point, put it AFTER the parentheses.  
**EXAMPLE:**        *Adah explains that “the lonely look down upon the hungry; the hungry look down upon the starving” and “the guilty blame the damaged” (174).*
- ☐ Check each quotation you use according to these guidelines.
  - Keep them short.
  - Quote phrases instead of full sentences if you can do so without changing meaning.
  - When omitting part of the original material, use an ellipsis (three SPACED periods) in place of the omitted portion. If the ellipsis comes at the end of the sentence use four spaced periods instead of three.
  - Use brackets [ ] around any explanatory material added to the quotation.
  - **Do NOT use a quotation all by itself unless it fits the natural flow and meaning of YOUR sentences. In other words, introduce and tie quotations into your writing; avoid letting them “float” on their own without words or punctuation connecting them to your words. Write a lead-in that flows into your quotation.**
  - Most punctuation marks go INSIDE of (before) the end quotation mark. Periods and commas go inside about 95% of the time. Question marks and exclamation marks go inside if they are part of the quotation and outside of the quotation marks if they are part of your sentence. Colons and semi-colons always go outside of the quotation marks.

### ORGANIZATION

- ☐ Check your title. Is it engaging? (Concrete words are usually better than abstracts.) Does it hint at your thesis– not just the subject?
- ☐ Check your introduction. Is the opening line grabbing? Are the transitions to the thesis smooth?
- ☐ Check your conclusion. Keep it “no nonsense”-- do NOT introduce new ideas here, yet try not to be exactly repetitive. Don’t start with “in conclusion” or “to conclude.” Instead trust your audience to know essay structure then follow its rules. Revise, if necessary.
- ☐ Check your transitions. The beginning sentence of each paragraph should directly refer to the thesis AND introduce the specific topic of the paragraph. Also, see if the transitions suggest momentum; in other words, are your ideas in the best order? Is your thesis building, growing more exciting? Will your reader need the last body paragraph or will it just be another example?
- ☐ Check your paragraph organization. Remember: only ONE topic per paragraph.

### STYLE (See your Writer’s Guide for further help.)

- ☐ Check your sentence fluency (flow) and complexity. Reading aloud is the best way to see if your sentences are wordy, awkward, redundant, overly simplistic, or confusing. Revise by rearranging and combining sentences.
- ☐ Check for sentence variety. Scanning, not reading, is your best method here. Look for repetitive sentence openings and lengths. Rearrange and/or combine sentences for better variety (sophistication!).
- ☐ Check word economy. Eliminate redundancies, extra words, jargon, clichés, expletives, unnecessary relative clauses, etc.
- ☐ Check for “dead” words? For formal writing, avoid first-person, second-person, references to your paper itself, contractions, abbreviations, symbols, slang, etc.
- ☐ Check your verbs. Eliminate passive verbs and replace them with active ones.
- ☐ Evaluate the voice of your writing: does your voice fit the purpose of your writing? Do you sound interested, confident, and knowledgeable?
- ☐ Ensure that the overall style you use shows an appropriate level of formality or informality for your purpose and audience.

### MECHANICS (this is a good area for peer revision)

- ☐ Check your grammar for standard, academic usage: are your verbs consistent in tense and parallel structure? Have you avoided run-ons and fragments? Do your pronouns agree with their antecedents– do they have antecedents?
- ☐ Check your mechanics for standard, academic usage: is your spelling perfect? Your punctuation marks (beware of colons, semi-colons, apostrophes)? Have you met the conventions of standard usage like italicizing titles of longer works, putting the titles of shorter works in quotation marks, citing an author by his or her last name, tucking commas and periods INSIDE quotation marks, etc.
- ☐ Check your format details:
  - ☐ Type your essay, double-spaced.
  - ☐ Indent your paragraphs but do not include any additional spaces between them.
  - ☐ Put your name and class period in the upper right hand corner, single-spaced.
  - ☐ Type the title of your essay two spaces below your name. Center this title, capitalize it appropriately. Underline it OR type it in all capital letters.
  - ☐ Check your margins and font. They should follow standard rules: 1” margins, 10 or 12 pt font, black ink, white plain paper, simple and easy to read (Calibri, Arial, Times New Roman)
  - ☐ Staple a rubric to the BACK of your paper. If you’ve lost your rubric, print another from the class website: [www.olympusbishop.wikispaces.com](http://www.olympusbishop.wikispaces.com)

